

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

Staff Handbook

2024-2025



Mrs. Ginger Almon – School Leader
Mrs. Courtney Greenway – Assistant Principal

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Shellman, Georgia 39886

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<https://www.swgeorgiastemcharter.com>

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This handbook has been designed for the faculty and staff at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SGSC). Purposeful planning was the guiding principle behind deciding what was best to include in this document. Suggestions for changes in policy and procedures are welcomed and will be given careful consideration by administration. All decisions will be made with a primary emphasis on what is best for the students.

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INTRODUCTION

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter Board of Education

Board Members

Tony Lee, Chairman

tlee@sowegastemcharter.org

Chris Weathersby, Vice-Chairman

cweathersby@sowegastemcharter.org

Patricia Goodman, Secretary

pgoodman@sowegastemcharter.org

Erwin Thomas, Voting Member

ljones@sowegastemcharter.org

Sherri Cartwright, Voting Member

scartwright@sowegastemcharter.org

Chief Financial Officer/Human Resources/School Nutrition

Lori Wilson

Federal Programs Director/Parent Engagement Coordinator/Homeless Liaison

Kadie Phillips

Data Coordinator/CTAE Director/Dual Enrollment Coordinator

Heather Page

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

185 Pecan Street
Shellman, Georgia 39886
229-345-3033

Principal
Ginger Almon

Assistant Principal
Courtney Greenway

Administrative Secretary
Deborah Richter

Special Education Director
Velvet Scoggins

School Vision and Mission Statement

SGSC Vision

A focused, competitive, hands-on, and joyful learning environment for all students that will prepare them to become successful, gracious, scholarly citizens.

SGSC Mission

Provide distinguished and integrated instruction in an environment that cultivates respect, is inclusive of all, and lays the foundation for excellence and life-long learning.

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to do their tasks more effectively.

Members of the Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board of Education have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. This policy does not supersede any employee’s or citizen’s right to contact Board members directly. However, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the administration for study and possible solution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is as follows:

CHAIN-OF-COMMAND

Discipline	Curriculum	Transportation
Teacher	Teacher/CTAE Director	Lead Bus Driver
Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal
Principal	Principal	Principal
Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent
School Board Member	School Board Member	School Board Member
State Department of Education	State Department of Education	State Department of Education

*ANY ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THIS CHART ADDRESSED BY PRINCIPAL

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Persons desiring to communicate with the Board shall submit a written request to the Board Office Administrative Assistant stating their name, home address, the topic about which they wish to speak and the group they represent, if applicable, no later than 12 o’clock on Wednesday prior to the scheduled Board meeting.

After reading such complaints, the Board may choose to consider the complaint in Executive Session, if the complaint concerns a topic that may lawfully be considered during executive session. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level or if the appropriate chain of command has not been attempted.

FACULTY & STAFF

<u>Pre-K</u> Julie Jackson Kayla Foxworth	<u>Instructional Coach</u> Kim Crowdis
<u>Kindergarten</u> Alex Redding Mackenzie Willis	<u>Graduation Coach and Assistant Principal</u> Courtney Greenway
<u>1st Grade</u> Mary Martha Ivey Jordan Scarborough	<u>Physical Education</u> Sandi Henson Jay Tully
<u>2nd Grade</u> Sonja Griffin Katy Jackson	<u>Administrative Assistant</u> Deborah Richter Jill Lee
<u>3rd Grade</u> Tonya Germany Ashley Perryman	<u>Athletic Director</u> Cristi Griffin
<u>4th Grade</u> Becki English Amy Ferri	<u>Custodial</u> LRL Ventures and Management - Renee Bentley
<u>5th Grade</u> Angie Bell Michael Duke	<u>Cafeteria</u> Michelle Andrews Cadie Kelley Stephanie McGruder Sarah Porter
<u>Middle School and High School Teachers</u> Ben Crowdis - Middle Grades Math Haley Edwards - Middle Grades Math Tessa Bell - Middle Grades ELA Shawn Banks - Middle Grades Science Tiffany Bagwell - Middle Grades Social Studies Raylee Etheridge - Middle Grades STEM/Math Support Gina McNair - Middle Grade ELA Support Hope White - High School History/Spanish Bridget Edison - Middle/High ELA Lana McFather - High School ELA Michelle Horne - High School Math Cristy Busby - High School Math Cindy Fincher - High School Science/Ag Venecia Lowry - High School Science Keith Beck - Middle/High School History Heather Page - CTAE Director/Dual Enrollment Jay Tully - Physical Education/Health Malanie Burnett - High School Marketing Alicia Babb - Middle Grades/Journalism Scott Wilkerson - Middle/High School Art	<u>Special Education Teachers</u> Velvet Scoggins - Director Kimberly Moore Christy McNamara Alda Thompson Kimberly Wilburn Myles Gay
	<u>Paraprofessionals</u> Jessica Hunter Kayla Foxworth Summer Fuller Gina Atchley Wanda Smith Jaden Hanks Linda Denning Beverly Blanton Mary Dale Bubba Redding
<u>Early Intervention Program</u> Annette Spoon - Math Courtney Floyd - Math Georgia Moye - Reading Tammy Taylor - Reading Toni Avera - Reading	<u>School Nurse</u> Jonna Lynch
<u>Gifted</u> Kim Peak	<u>Maintenance</u> Wayne Harrison
<u>Media Center</u> McKenzie Ragan	<u>MTSS Coordinator</u> Leslie Presley
<u>Transportation</u> Richie Smith - Lead Phyllis Slaughter Wilson Harris	<u>Title IX Coordinator</u> Ginger Almon
Sarah Porter-Moore Karen Hawkins Stephanie McGruder	

Equal Opportunity Statement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School complies with all federal, state, and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students and employees. The school prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, disability, genetic information, nationality and/or citizenship in admission, grading, discipline, hiring, employment decisions or any other activity. The school complies with all requirements of Title VII, Title IX, EPA, ADEA, ADA, Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Civil Rights Act of 1991.

All decisions of the School Board and Administration will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above or any other discriminatory criteria.

Closed Campus

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School maintains a closed campus while in operation. This includes exterior entry doors, as well as classroom interior doors, once instruction begins for each class period. All visitors and students must enter the main building from the main entrance at the front of the school. Door open for brief periods must have a staff member in the entry for direct monitoring. No exterior doors may be propped open at any time.

II

EMPLOYEE DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

HOURS OF DUTY

The school day for all staff members is from 7:30 am until 3:30 pm. Employees will sign in and out each day using the Checkmate feature located within Infinite Campus. Failure to sign in/out each day utilizing the Infinite Campus portal may result in an absence being documented for the day.

Permission must be obtained from the principal prior to signing out before 3:30 pm. The appropriate paperwork must be completed prior to leaving the building. **Requests for sick leave must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance. Personal Leave Forms should be submitted to the principal at least 5 days prior to leave if possible.** Follow-up forms after an absence must be submitted in a timely manner. Contact GINGER ALMON if there is a need for absence without a leave form - 229.321.2219. Teachers will greet their students at the door every morning. Students are not to be lined up in the hall waiting for teachers to let them in the classroom. Additionally, students are to be properly supervised at all times. On the first day of school, teachers may receive parents in their classrooms. Please make sure that every child knows how he/she will get home.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON DUTY

MORNING DUTY - ALL YEAR		
All teachers with a homeroom class should be in their classrooms by 7:30 a.m. - at the door to welcome students		
Staff	Time	Location
Myles Gay/Bubba Redding/Cristi Griffin	7:30 - 8:00	Car Rider Door- Open doors and welcome students
Alicia Babb Michelle Horne	7:30 - 8:00	Bus Rider Door & Main Building - welcome students
Kayla Foxworth	7:30 - 8:00	Pre-K Building to get the Pre-K
Velvet Scoggins Courtney Floyd	7:30 - 8:00	Outside and Inside of Lunchroom
Jay Tully	7:30 - 8:00	Student Parking Area
Leslie Presley Beverly Blanton	7:30 - 8:00	Main Building Hallway - Locker Area
Sandi Henson	7:30 - 8:00	Main Building - Side Entrance
Courtney Greenway	7:30 - 8:00	Main Building - Hallway Entrance
Scott Wilkerson	7:30 - 8:00	Walkway between 2 nd Grade and 5 th Grade
Raylee Etheridge	7:30 - 8:00	Walkway between 2 nd Grade and 5 th Grade

Afternoon Duty - All Year		
Staff	Time	Location
BEGIN at 3:00: Jill Lee, Kim Crowdis	3:05 - 3:15	Car Rider Line (typing in students)
Rotation: Alex Lovering Kim Moore Ashley Perryman	3:05 - 3:15	Car Rider (inside building - getting rider info from the caller)
Rotation: Annette Spoon Toni Avera	3:05 - 3:15	Monitor car riders until others arrive and after
Rotation: Mary Martha Ivey Mackenzie Willis	3:05 - 3:15	Cone Position # 1 (put students into cars)
Rotation: Julie Jackson Jordan Scarborough	3:05 - 3:15	Cone Position # 2 (put students into cars)
Rotation: Katy Jackson Jessica Hunter	3:05 - 3:15	Cone Position # 3 (put students into cars)
Rotation: Summer Fuller Sonja Griffin	3:05 - 3:15	Cone Position # 4 (put students into cars)
Rotation: Tessa Bell Michael Duke Malanie Burnett	3:05 - 3:15	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Rotation: Shawn Banks Amy Ferri Bridget Edison	3:05 - 3:15	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Rotation: Angie Bell Tonya Germany	3:05 - 3:15	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Rotation: Haley Kintzinger Tiffany Bagwell	3:05 - 3:15	Inside Car Rider Monitor

Rotation: Christy McNamara Cristy Busby	3:05 - 3:15	Inside Car Rider Monitor
Rotation: Ben Crowdis Keith Beck	3:05 - 3:15	Student Parking
Rotation: Becki English Gina McNair	3:05 - 3:15	Monitor Buses
Rotation: Alda Thompson Lana McFather Venecia Lowry Hope White	3:05 - 3:15	Locker Area

PARKING

Faculty and staff will park in the designated parking area, which is located at the front of the school - paved parking lot, the side of the school next to mobile units, and the side of the school - next to the yellow building. The area beside the mobile units will be used for student parking. There is a designated area in front of the school for visitor parking.

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

All personnel, including principals, are expected to be present on the job at all times unless personal illness, death, family emergency, or other conditions approved by the leader of school necessitate their absence. The employee is responsible for reporting his/her illness or emergency and for requesting leave for other conditions to the principal. When an emergency absence is necessary please call or text the principal.

Reminder: The school day for all staff members is from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM.

Staff members that are constantly late for the work will receive a warning and ultimately a write-up from the principal if the tardiness continues. Please do not send anyone - other than yourself - to sign into the kiosk each morning (no children of employees will sign in for the employee).

All staff members - with the exception of hourly employees - begin the year with 3 personal days that may be used for personal reasons. Excessive personal leave days (more than three) will be deducted from the paycheck of the person requesting the personal leave days. Staff members accrue 1 ¼ days per month in sick leave - 12 ½ days for the year. These days may be used for appointments, sick time, sick children, etc. Both sick and personal days will be allotted at the beginning of the school year to use throughout.

When a professional staff member's absence from duty extends beyond the limits set by the state, Mrs. Almon will continue to be responsible for securing a qualified person to fill in during each absence. Salary for the teacher will be discontinued after the allotted 12 1/2 days. Substitutes will be paid through the office of the CFO. Pay will be adjusted on the basis of 1/190 of each day absent beyond the 12 1/2 days established by the State.

In accordance with the state law, a person may request up to three days of personal leave or professional leave. This request must be made in writing to the principal. Completing follow-up paperwork is the employee's responsibility. Having to constantly remind employees to submit paperwork will reflect negatively on annual evaluations.

All requests for accommodations and/or FMLA Leave should be directed to the Human Resources Director - Lori Wilson.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT REQUESTS

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("Act") as adopted by the U. S. Congress. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School Board does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect.

FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have worked for SOWEGA Stem for at least 12 months and worked at least 1250 hours within the 12 month period.

An employee may request leave for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth of a child and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement of a child with the employee;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent if that person has a serious health condition.
4. Serious health condition of employee that prevents the employee from performing the job functions.
5. Because of qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent is a covered military member on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation;
6. To care for a covered service member (hereinafter defined) with a serious injury or illness when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin.

If an employee is eligible for FMLA Leave, the employee is required to provide 30-day advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable and such notice is practicable. If advance notice is not practicable, the employee must give notice either the same or next business day.

When using FMLA, an employee is required to complete the necessary documentation of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and follow call-in procedures. The call-in procedure is satisfied by calling the School Leader on a once a week basis while on approved Family Medical Leave.

If FMLA is being used because of an employee's inability to work due to health conditions, an employee must submit a release from his/her physician releasing the employee to go back to work. Southwest

Georgia STEM Charter School will NOT allow the employee to return to any duties at the school without clearance from the employee's physician.

Employees will be eligible to maintain health care benefits provided by the district while on FMLA leave. The School will pay the employer's portion, if any, of such benefits. The employee will pay the same portion, if any, of such benefits as the employee paid before beginning the leave.

FMLA leave runs concurrently with Paid Parental Leave if the leave is for a qualified reason under those laws.

For more information on FMLA, please go to <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fm>

Contact the Human Resources Manager/CFO for information related to FMLA at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code 20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed under state evaluation programs and/or locally developed evaluation programs. (See TKES Standards in Appendix). At-will employees are assessed using locally developed evaluation programs.

The Act of The General Assembly of 1992, O.C.G.A. §2-2-989.5 et seq. mandates that Georgia local Board of Education ensure that certified personnel have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible and proceed to the next level as needed. (See Board policy for further explanation)

LESSON PLANS

Folders will be set up in Google Drive for your lesson plans so that administration and cooperating teachers will have access to them. The school approved lesson plan template must be utilized. Lesson plans for ALL subject areas are due on Sunday of each week for the upcoming week. Hard copies of lesson plans must also be kept in a visible binder in the classroom.

Substitute Lesson Plans

When a teacher is absent from school, specific lesson plans for the day must be left on the teacher's desk and clearly labeled. Emergency lesson plans should be included in the daily lesson plan notebook. The plan should be updated frequently and should include:

Key for the room
Duty Information

Extra assignments/worksheets
Roster with a seating chart for each class
General Class Procedures & Time Structure
Daily Schedule
Disciplinary Form
Lesson plan
Weather/Fire Alarm Instructions
Emergency lesson plan
Hall Passes
Special Instructions for Students w/Health Issues

MEETINGS

All teachers are expected to attend scheduled meetings unless they are prohibited from doing so by some cause beyond their control. Promptness is essential to the success of all meetings. Meetings and conferences will be scheduled in the afternoon when feasible, and at least a two day notice will be given when possible. Requests to be excused from a meeting must be submitted to the principal. Personnel should plan appointments and responsibilities for days other than these prescribed dates.

Scheduled Meetings

Collaboration is essential to improving student learning. The mandate for meeting should not be viewed to satisfy a request by the building principal but an opportunity to discuss improvements among grade level teams. Collaborative Plannings will occur by scheduled appointments each week with Mrs. Crowdis - schedule will be provided to all teachers.

Mondays:

- **8:30 am - 9:30 am:** Admin Meetings (Almon, Smith, Scoggins, Page, Greenway, K. Crowdis, Presley, Wilson, Phillips, Hayes)
- **5:30 pm: Every Third Monday** - Finance Committee Meeting and Governance Committee Meeting

Wednesdays:

- **3:30 - 4:30 pm: Second Wednesday of the Month** - PLC for all staff
- **3:30 - 4:30 pm: Fourth Wednesday of the Month** - PLC for all staff

Thursdays:

- **5:30 pm: Every Third Thursday of the Month** - Board of Directors Meeting
- **3:30 - 4:30 pm: First Thursday of the Month** - Leadership Team Meeting
- **3:30 - 4:30 pm: Third Thursday of the Month** - Leadership Team Meeting

- **3:30 pm - 4:30 pm: Last Thursday of the Month** - Faculty Meeting - unless I can send the information in an email :)

REPORTING STUDENTS' ABSENCES

Classroom attendance should be entered in Infinite Campus by no later than 8:30 am each day by the teacher. **All Middle/High teachers will be expected to enter attendance for each period that they are teaching students.** If for some reason, technology is not working a paper copy of attendance should be sent to the front office. The school secretary will change the report for tardy students. Excuses for absences should be forwarded to the front office.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

1. E-mails/Announcements/Postings: Consult your email at least daily for announcements and other items of interest. Other announcements will be made verbally and in writing as needed. Our school website, school Facebook page, and Google calendar are also excellent sources of information.
2. Out-of-School Communications and Discipline Referrals: Notices from Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are very important in creating a positive image. Correspondence which contains errors, is poorly worded, or is illegibly written creates poor public relations. This is a matter which requires serious and constant attention. Have a colleague proof-read your communication before sending to parents. Any correspondence on official school letterhead must have the approval of the principal.
3. School-wide Communication: Any correspondence, to include school newsletters, school fundraisers, notices from the Department of Education, registration information, etc., will go out to our students in a timely manner. Another means of communication between home and school is the automated notification system used to inform parents of important messages from the school. Encourage parents to ensure that the school has current contact numbers so that they will be well-informed about student activities. Please ensure that the preferred Home Language of the Parent is used when disseminating information.
4. Parent Meetings: Because of the instructional demands placed on the administration and faculty, parents will be encouraged to schedule appointments to discuss any student or school concerns.

BUILDING CONCERNS

Each classroom teacher is responsible for making sure that air conditioning units are set to 78 every day before leaving. Computers need to be completely shut down for breaks that extend beyond 2 days. Maintenance and technology requests will be submitted via Google Forms in a link that will be sent out at the start of school.

PURCHASES AND REIMBURSEMENT

Any time employees purchase goods or services for the school and expect a reimbursement, they are required to gain prior approval from the principal. The principal will complete a Purchase Order to be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer for the reimbursement or to purchase the needed items.

Directors for Special Education, Nutrition, and Gifted will complete their own Purchase Orders to be signed by the principal. Once the principal signs the Purchase Order, the Directors may submit an order for their items identified on the Purchase Order.

SAFETY

Employees will be aware of emergency procedures in the event of fire, tornado, or other events listed in the safety plan distributed at the beginning of the year. Each classroom will be equipped with a map of each building that showcases the exit plans for evacuation. Each teacher will ensure that the emergency kit in the classroom is current with updated rosters and equipment.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

Purpose

To provide knowledge to employees/clients/families/other individuals on infectious/ communicable diseases that arise in the community, which could threaten their health and safety and to give direction on how to effectively and efficiently control them.

Policy

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees/students/families/other individuals, by establishing procedures for responding to the infectious/communicable diseases and for protecting the privacy of infected persons, in accordance with the requirements of the Georgia Board of Education rule 160-1-3-.03.

Definitions

1. Infectious Diseases

An infectious disease is an illness caused by a specific infectious agent or its toxic products, which can be passed on from one individual to another. It may be transmitted directly from one body to another, without the help of other objects such as kissing, droplet spray from sneezing, coughing, spitting, singing or talking. It may be passed indirectly when an object transmits the organism.

Objects of transmission could be utensils, food, water, milk, clothing, linens, air, soil or insects.

They include, but are not limited to:

Malaria	⌘	Chicken Pox
Strep Throat	⌘	Conjunctivitis
Influenza (the flu)	⌘	Hepatitis (A, B, C)

HIV/Aids	⌘ Lice
Measles	⌘ Ringworm
Mumps	⌘ Scabies
Rubella	⌘ Scarlet Fever
SARS	⌘ Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Tuberculosis	⌘ Yeast Infections
COVID	
Common Cold	

Procedures

1. Employees, who become aware of an infectious/communicable disease, shall:
 - a. report any confirmed occurrences of infectious diseases to the leader of the school;
 - b. follow the policies and procedures for infection control; and,
 - c. take recommended training or refresher training for infection control, if needed.
2. Upon becoming aware of the infectious/communicable disease, the principal shall:
 - a. Send the infected person to the nursing facility located on school grounds.
 - b. follow all medical advice from the appropriate health authority;
 - c. advise employees about its existence; and, review measures for dealing with it;
 - d. remind employees about the infectious/communicable disease policy including:
 - i. an overview of the policy; and,
 - ii. the location of the written policy.
 - e. provide general information and infections control measures to teachers/families; and,
 - f. ensure that infection control practices are followed.
3. Should exposure to a blood-borne disease occur, leader of the school and employees shall follow the procedures outlined in *Reporting and Recording Exposure to Blood-borne Diseases*.
4. The leader of the school shall ensure a “*Post Exposure Incident Report for Blood-borne Diseases*” is completed for any employee whose eye(s), mouth, other mucous membrane or no intact skin has come in contact with blood, a potentially infectious material(s) or needle/sharp object(s) while performing his/her duties.
5. The leader of the school and employees shall respect the privacy rights of individuals who have contracted an infectious/communicable disease.
6. The leader of the school and employees shall not discriminate against individuals who have contracted an infectious/communicable disease or who have positive antibodies to a blood-borne disease.

Guidelines

1. The leader of the school is responsible for ensuring the policy is followed.

2. Employees shall be given information on infectious/communicable diseases and their control measures.
3. Employees shall receive training on infectious/contagious diseases upon initial assignment and annually thereafter.
4. Training for infectious/contagious diseases shall include:
 - a. what infectious/contagious diseases are, how they are contacted, how they are transmitted and how they are controlled;
 - b. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards;
 - c. Universal Precautions
 - d. employer's policies and procedures;
 - e. employer's exposure control plan;
 - f. personal protective equipment;
 - g. engineering and work practice controls.
5. Training records shall include:
 - a. dates when training was given;
 - b. summary on what training was given;
 - c. names and credentials of person(s) providing the training; and,
 - d. names and positions of people attending the training sessions.
6. Records are to be maintained for 3 years from the date of training.
7. Students/families/other individuals who have/been exposed to infectious/contagious diseases shall be given basic information including what infectious/contagious diseases are, how they are contacted, how they are transmitted and how they are controlled.
8. Each LEA shall limit the disclosure of health-related information of its employees and students. FERPA prohibits the unauthorized disclosure of information from educational records except in certain limited circumstances, such as a health and safety emergency as described in 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a) (10) and 99.36. Additionally, the disclosure of certain confidential health information may be a misdemeanor punishable under O.C.G.A. § 24-9-47.

PROFESSIONALISM & CONFIDENTIALITY

Dress Code - As professionals, teachers, and administrators are expected to dress appropriately for their duties, to adhere to the standards and expectations of their profession and to conduct themselves in a proper manner with their colleagues, parents, and all others.

Educators must particularly remember at all times that we are not just instructors of specific skills, but more importantly, we are role models for our students as well as important members of the community. The educator's demeanor and personal appearance strongly influences setting the tone in the classrooms and within the school. The teachers' dress is expected to be more modest than the students. If you question an item's appropriateness for school, it is probably better not to wear it.

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School faculty should wear modest clothing associated with our status as professionals tempered with common sense toward a comfortable work day. Jeans are allowed each day.

Cell Phone Use

The use of a personal cell phone by teachers and staff in the presence of students for accessing social media sites, playing games, chatting, or texting **will not be prohibited**. Instructional time should be used for instruction. Emergencies are understood.

Employee's Children On Campus

The children of faculty and staff are permitted to stay with their parents at school during teacher work days. If on campus during after-school hours, they must remain in the presence of their parents or an adult designee at all times.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of each and every employee in our system to keep any information regarding a student confidential. Discussing the grades, behavior, or general personality traits of an individual child must be limited to the parents (or legal guardian), other teachers with a “need to know” and the administration of the school. Those discussions must be made in proper places at proper times. You never know who may be listening to your conversations. (for Student Privacy and FERPA).

Workplace Gossip

Different problems arise because of gossip in the workplace. Workplace gossip is unethical according to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and has no place in the school where children should be the focus and look to us as role models for appropriate behavior. Some examples of the harmful consequences of gossip are: lost productivity and wasted time, morale and trust are eroded, feelings and reputations are hurt, good employees may leave due to an unhealthy atmosphere. When you are tempted to participate in rumors or gossip, ask yourself these questions:

- Is what I am about to say true?
- Is it harmless?
- Is it necessary?
- How would I feel if someone said something similar about me?
- How would I feel if I saw my words quoted in the daily paper tomorrow?
- How am I going to feel later if I say or listen to this?
- Does gossiping honor my own personal values?

Concerns that affect that school should be brought to the attention of administration immediately and not allowed to fester into a situation that brings about bad public relations. Workplace gossip **will not be tolerated** and could result in a write up placed in the teacher's folder and negative scores related to TKES evaluations (professionalism).

Social Media

The Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School asks that all school personnel and staff refrain from the use of social media during the school day. Use includes, but is not limited to: accessing, browsing, commenting, contacting, liking, and uploading. Social media includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter. In addition, school personnel and staff that use social media to post direct or indirect negativity about the school or other personnel and staff at the school will be violating ethical standards. These actions may result in a write placed in the teacher's folder and negative scores related to TKES evaluations (professionalism).

Building a Positive School Climate & Culture

The same diversity that will make us successful will also help create friction if we allow it. We cannot expect to work nearly 1600 hours together without any friction from time to time. Working together for the good of the school is our goal! Personal differences should be handled individually if possible. It is extremely important to demonstrate to the students our commitment to not only education but a camaraderie which enhances the atmosphere in the workplace and encourages a positive climate in our school. In the event you cannot settle your differences, please follow the chain of command in this manual for all grievances.

Harassment

It is the policy of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to maintain a learning environment that is free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the School staff to harass a student or employee through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

Pursuant to the federal regulations implementing Title IX published in 2020, any complaint involving "sexual harassment" as defined by those federal regulations that occurs in a Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School ("School") education program or activity against a person in the United States shall be addressed

pursuant to the School Title IX Grievance Policy set out below and the School's Title IX Grievance Procedure

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the Assistant Secretary of the Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, or to the following:

Ginger Almon: Title IX Coordinator for Student Matters

School Leader
185 Pecan Street, Shellman, GA 39886
229.345.3033
galmon@sowegastemcharter.org

Ginger Almon: Title IX Coordinator for Employee Matters
School Leader
185 Pecan Street, Shellman, GA 39886
229.345.3033
galmon@sowegastemcharter.org

DEFINITION OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- A. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment;
- B. Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of a student's educational opportunities or development; or
- C. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a basis for education decisions affecting the student.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, offensive or unwelcome sexual advances or propositions; unwelcome intentional touching of intimate body areas; dating of a student by an employee; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading verbal comments about an individual or his/her physical attributes; the display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards or letters; lewd or suggestive comments or gestures, off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a student.

Sexual harassment may occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to, the following:

- A. The victim as well as the harasser may be male or female. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- B. The harasser may be an employee of the School, a non-employee, or another student.
- C. Sexual harassment may occur without economic or academic injury to the victim.

REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

- A. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported as soon as possible so that prompt corrective

action may be taken if warranted, and no later than 30 days after the incident.

- B. The report should be made or forwarded to the appropriate Title IX Coordinator/ Investigator at the address and telephone number stated above.
- C. The initial report of the incident may be made in person, by telephone or in writing.
- D. The Title IX investigator will discuss the matter with the student complainant and/or the student's parent/guardian at the earliest practical time in order to secure the details and circumstances giving rise to the complaint. At the meeting, the procedure for investigating the situation will be explained and the student or parent/guardian will be provided with a complaint form to complete and sign. A sample complaint form, calling for a detailed description of the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint, will be provided by the Title IX Coordinator or designee.
- E. Filing a complaint under this procedure does not prevent the student from also pursuing other remedies available under the law. Students and/or their parents may also file a complaint regarding misconduct with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through their website, www.gapsc.com.

INVESTIGATION

- A. The Title IX Coordinator shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. Such investigation shall include interviews with the accused party or parties, interviews with any witnesses, and an examination of any relevant documents or other evidence. In appropriate circumstances, school officials may request relevant medical records or other documentation from the student.
- B. An investigation should be completed within a reasonable time period, but no more than 60 days from the initial report of the incident to the Title IX Coordinator.
- C. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator or designee shall prepare a written report that sets forth the findings of the investigation and the evidence in support of the findings. A copy of the report will be available to the student making the complaint or the student's parent/guardian, but will not include information on other students protected by federal or state privacy laws. A copy of the report shall be transmitted to the Title IX Decision Maker.

RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT:

- A. Both parties shall have the right to submit written questions of the other side or a witness during the formal grievance process.
- B. If it is determined that sexual harassment occurred, the Title IX Decision Maker shall recommend appropriate corrective and disciplinary action to prevent a recurrence of the harassment.
- C. Appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, suspension, non-renewal or termination of an employee offender or the suspension or expulsion of a student offender. Appropriate procedures will be followed

where required by law.

APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Either party shall have the right to appeal to the School Leader on a limited basis. An appeal is only allowed if the party assert on appeal that: *a.* A procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter; *b.* New evidence that was not reasonably available to the appealing party at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- c.* The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.
 - d.* The discipline is inappropriate: too harsh, not harsh enough, incomplete, or incorrect.
- B. The party shall be entitled to a written appeal to the School Leader within thirty school days following the Title IX Decision. The appeal shall solely be to allow the parties to present their information in support or in opposition to the decision. The School Leader may, in its discretion, authorize in-person appeal hearings or virtual hearings.
- C. The School Leader must issue written notice of the decision describing the result of the appeal and any stated rationale within 5 school days of the decision.

NONDISCLOSURE OF PROCEEDINGS:

- A. Except as otherwise required by law, complaints and investigations under this procedure shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a need to know for purposes of investigating or resolving the complaint. All disclosures are subject to state and federal privacy laws. Any employee or student who releases information in violation of this procedure shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- B. The Title IX Coordinator shall maintain the files and records relating to reports and investigations of sexual harassment.

NO RETALIATION:

Retaliating against anyone for filing a complaint or for participating in an investigation of a complaint filed under this procedure is prohibited. Any employee or student who retaliates in violation of this procedure shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Students or employees who knowingly make false charges of harassment may be subject to disciplinary action as well as any civil or criminal legal proceedings.

PUBLICATION AND NOTIFICATION:

The School's policy and procedure on sexual harassment will be explained to all students and employees. A summary of the policy and procedure shall be included in student and faculty handbooks.

As required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-1184, a principal or designee who receives a report of a sexual offense (as defined in Chapter 6 of Title 16 of Georgia law) and has a reasonable cause to believe that the report is valid must immediately report the matter to the appropriate superintendent, the appropriate police authority and the School attorney. These offenses include, but are not limited to, sexual battery, rape, and molestation.

Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior

This policy is adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7. All students, parents, relatives and friends of students are encouraged to make an oral report of an incident when a student has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, other school system employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school. This oral report may be made to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer affiliated with the school shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school leader, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the school leader is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Board Chair or the Board's designee. The School Leader, upon receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report to the appropriate authorities immediately, but in no later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney. Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, other employee, or volunteer not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school leader shall make an immediate written report to the Chair of the Board, the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division (if applicable) and any other outside authorities. When an investigation is conducted by law enforcement, upon receipt of information that law enforcement officials have substantiated a report of abuse, the allegations shall be reported to the Georgia Professional Standards Commissions' Ethics Division.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse

The Governing Board of Southwest Georgia Stem Charter hereby adopts the following policy regarding reports of child abuse which shall be effective on the date the policy is adopted by the Board.

1. All employees of the Governing Board, including all teachers, administrators, school counselors, visiting teachers, as well as all school social workers, school psychologists, and all other personnel employed by the Board and volunteers, who have reason or cause to believe that a child is being or has been abused shall report that abuse to the school leader or designee immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases in Randolph County.
2. All employees shall report all child abuse including verbal, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation, child neglect, youth on youth sexual act, or youth on youth abusive sexual contact involving any child under the age of 18.
3. The employee shall include all pertinent factual evidence, dates, names, incidents, witnesses, and other evidentiary information causing suspicion of abuse or neglect in the report. Such documentation shall be retained separately from a student's cumulative file.
4. All board members, employees and volunteers of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School are required to undergo training as to what constitutes child abuse and neglect, what the state statutes are, and how to properly report such cases.
5. Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.
6. The following definitions shall apply to this policy.
 - a. **Child**: Any individual who is under the age of 18 years, if alleged to be a deprived child, abused child, or unruly child.
 - b. **Child Abuse**: An adult causing bodily injury to a youth other than by accidental means. Use of physical control measures commonly accepted in public schools shall not constitute abuse.
 - c. **School Leader**: For the purposes of this policy, the staff member responsible for the overall operation of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.
 - d. **Injury**: Bruises, cuts, or complaint of pain related to a physical altercation or direct contact with a child.
 - e. **Neglect**: Lack of supervision, abandonment, and/or disregard for the child's basic needs for food, shelter, medical care or education that places the child at substantial risk of harm.
 - f. **Sexual Abuse/Exploitation**: Invasion of privacy, or staff voyeurism for sexual gratification including an adult employing, using, persuading, enticing or coercing a youth under the age of 18 to engage in any act which involves: sexual intercourse

(genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal between persons of the same or opposite sex), bestiality, masturbation, lewd exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of any person, flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude, physical restraint of a person who is nude, physical contact in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification with any person's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks or a female's clothed or unclothed breasts, defecation or urination for the purpose of sexual stimulation, penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure conducted by a person who allows, permits, encourages or requires a youth to participate in prostitution or sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium.

- g. Youth on Youth Sexual Act: Contact between any youth (regardless of their ages) that involves:
 - i. Contact between the penis and vagina or the penis and anus, including penetration (however slight); or
 - ii. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vagina or anus; or
 - iii. Penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person by a hand, finger, or other object.
- h. Youth on Youth Abusive Sexual Contact: Contact between youth that involves intentional touching, either directly or indirectly, or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks when the intent is not to harm or debilitate.

III. STUDENT INFORMATION

SCHOOL RECORDS

Registration Packets - Registration packets will be completed for any new students. Please submit any new documentation pertaining to student information to the front office. This information will be updated in Infinite Campus by school administrators.

School Documents

Treat all school documents (admit slips, roll books, discipline referrals, attendance and absentee sheets, report cards, etc.) as confidential. At no time should these be accessible to students. Remember to turn your computer off when you are not available to supervise.

Cumulative Folders

Students' cumulative records are to be signed out upon removing them from the front office and signed back in upon returning them.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Tips on establishing preventive discipline:

- Lessons should be carefully planned. Boredom is a potent enemy of good discipline.
- Be certain you have everyone's attention before starting the lesson.
- The teacher's voice is a most effective instrument in the classroom. Avoid the two extremes of speaking too softly or too loudly; both may be ineffective.
- Enlist as many students as possible in the lesson. When students are actively involved in learning, they are less likely to cause problems.
- Use students' names often and create an expectation in students that they may be called on at any time.
- Plan questions that accommodate all ability levels in the class.
- When using the board, be sure the class is in full view and that all students can see the board.
- Move around the room often, casually, and naturally. Movements should be planned. Proximity control is a powerful tool when trying to eliminate off-task behavior such as talking or not paying attention.

- Appeal to the student's ego. Praise students publicly.
- A teacher who gives the impression of knowing how to handle problems without writing every small problem on a discipline referral will be in control and will earn the respect of students. Teacher-imposed consequences and consistency are much more effective in retaining respect and control rather than those imposed by an administrator.
- Do not use threats or sarcasm. A smile and a good sense of humor go a long way.
- Avoid making an issue of a student's behavior publicly. Talk with the student privately.

PRIOR TO WRITING A REFERRAL, YOU SHOULD:

- Contact the parents. Generally, contact through a telephone call will help; otherwise, have the parents come to school to have a face-to-face conference with you and the student.
- Get all the information that is available about the pupil. Make use of the guidance files.
- Privately inform the student he has a choice of either acceptable conduct or referral.
- Should unacceptable conduct persist and you feel you have been consistent with following the behavior plan, fill out a discipline referral form and issue it to the appropriate administrative office.
- Measures available to the administration are:
 1. Continued investigation
 2. After school detention
 3. Behavior contract
 4. Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
 5. Repayment of damages by student
 6. Referral to legal authorities
 7. Conference with parents, student, teacher, and/or administration

Teachers' classroom management procedures will be monitored to determine if there is a problem with implementation and consistency. Before an initial referral is made, teachers need to take ownership of improvements needed in their plan. Once a student has been referred to the office, you have deferred decision-making to an administrator. The discipline of that student will be at the discretion of the administration.

- Do not make threats that you as a teacher cannot carry out. Never tell a student what an administrator will do to him/her.
- Administrators are the only ones who have the authority to suspend students from classes. (HB605 modifications will be implemented).

It is important that we are respectful of students in our disciplinary responses. Consequences should focus on teaching, remediation, or logical consequences as much as possible. In providing consequences we also want to be mindful of the instructional time students are missing with the goal of minimizing the amount of instructional time missed.

<p style="text-align: center;">Level 1 Minor Offenses Classroom Managed Behavior</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 2 Major Offenses Office Managed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 3 Illegal Offenses Office Managed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running in the hallway ● Loud voices/yelling ● Off-task behavior ● Noise making ● Class Disruption ● Failure to complete assignments and/or bring materials to class ● Out of Seat ● Horseplay ● Breaking cafeteria rules ● Breaking playground rules ● Inappropriate behavior in the bathrooms ● Distracting paraphernalia (games, phones, tablets, etc.) ● Chewing gum or eating candy except by teacher permission ● Violation of Dress Code ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major verbal altercation/major disruption ● Fighting/physical aggression ● Harassment/bullying ● Persistent/Willful Disobedience ● Insubordination ● Leaving class/campus without permission ● Property destruction/misuse ● Theft ● Forgery ● Unauthorized use of electronic devices/Internet misuse/cyberbullying ● Trespassing ● Offensive Touching ● Disorderly conduct ● Cheating ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assault/Battery ● Sexual Acts ● Use or possession of alcohol under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event ● Weapons (possess, use or transmit) ● Threatening staff ● Bullying students ● Use or possession of drugs; under the influence of while on campus or a school sponsored event ● Terroristic Threats (staff/students) ● Arson ● Threatening to destroy school property (bomb, fire, shootings) ● Extreme property damage/vandalism ● Blatant disrespect of teachers/staff ● Any other acts or violations which the Principal or Designee deem reasonable to fall in this category

CONSEQUENCES

Level 1 Minor Offenses Classroom Managed Behavior	Level 2 Major Offenses Office Managed	Level 3 Illegal Offenses Office Managed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Teacher warning Ø Parental contact · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Teacher warning Ø Parent conference · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Administrative referral <p>Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Successive offenses may result in after school detention or out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Administrative Discretion Ø Parental contact · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø After school detention Ø Parent conference · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø After school detention (2 Days) <p>Ø Behavior contract implementation</p> <p>Ø Invitation for parent/guardian to accompany student to school or classes</p> <p>Ø Successive offenses may result in out of school suspension (OSS) as assigned by administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Out of school suspension (3 - 5 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Student behavior contract · 2nd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø OSS (5 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Follow-up of behavior contract · 3rd Offense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø OSS (7 days) Ø Parent conference Ø Possible tribunal <p>· All Level 3 violations are zero tolerance offenses. Successive offenses may also result in expulsion</p>
The principal will be the final say in the decisions related to identified behaviors. The chart above is meant to serve as a guide for educators and administrators - these are not the exact consequences for each violation. Decisions are subject to administration.		

Official Student Code of Conduct

Section One: Purpose

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is committed to creating a safe, positive environment for all of our students, staff, parents, and community partners. The school will work to assure that all students and staff are well-motivated, fully aware of their potential and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. The School believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. The School utilizes a range of activities to recognize, celebrate, and reward positive behavior at the classroom, school, and district levels.

The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this policy is to state clearly our standards for acceptable conduct of students. The policy also explains the consequences for not meeting these standards of conduct. This policy is a strict policy for conduct that endangers the safety of the schools and/or disrupts the educational experience for other students. The School does not permit corporal punishment.

The policy also sets forth the discipline procedures for the students who have committed violations. This policy is not meant to be a contract between the District and the students, and may be amended at any time.

Section Two: Scope of the Policy

Every student is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this policy are designed toward that end and shall apply during the following times and in the following places:

- a. On school grounds at any time;
- b. Off school grounds at a school bus stop, on a school bus, school activity, function, or event;
- c. When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is en route to and/or from school, or to or from a school activity, function or event;
- d. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.5(c)).
- e. Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities such as field trips, conferences, or athletic events; or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;

f. Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a school student or employee and is related to the victim's school affiliation, or when the off-campus conduct directly affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school; and

g. Off school grounds and when a student leaves without permission of a school official or any time Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this policy do not apply to student speech that occurs off campus if the speech is at a non-school sponsored event and does not cause or is not likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or a school activity.

Section Three: Equal Opportunity Statement

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School complies with all federal, state, and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students and employees. The school prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, disability, genetic information, nationality and/or citizenship in admission, grading, discipline, hiring, employment decisions or any other activity. The school complies with all requirements of Title VII, Title IX, EPA, ADEA, ADA, Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Civil Rights Act of 1991.

All decisions of the School Board and Administration will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above or any other discriminatory criteria.

Section Four: Statement of Student Misconduct

The rules in this policy are designed to notify students (grades K-12) as to the types of behaviors that are unacceptable; nevertheless, every specific variation of the prohibited conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for misconduct that is obviously inappropriate. A specific rule need not be written for every conceivable variation of behavior that directly affects the orderly mission of the school.

Section Five: References to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated

References to Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) included in this policy do not require that the elements of the specific criminal code section referenced be proved beyond a reasonable doubt before schools may punish misconduct. Further, these code references do not impose any additional intent requirements upon schools pursuing discipline against students for violation of this policy.

When a school rule is violated that may also be a violation of the law, the schools may notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Section Six: Discipline Rules and Prohibited Conduct

The Governing Board of Southwest Georgia Stem Charter hereby adopts the following discipline policy and student code of conduct which shall be effective on the date the policy is adopted by the Board.

Section One: Purpose

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (“School”) is committed to creating a safe, positive environment for all of our students, staff, parents, and community partners. The school will work to assure that all students and staff are well-motivated, fully aware of their potential and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. The School believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. The School utilizes a range of activities to recognize, celebrate, and reward positive behavior at the classroom, school, and district levels.

The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this policy is to state clearly our standards for acceptable conduct of students. The policy also explains the consequences for not meeting these standards of conduct. This policy is a strict policy for conduct that endangers the safety of the schools and/or disrupts the educational experience for other students. The School does not permit corporal punishment.

The policy also sets forth the discipline procedures for the students who have committed violations. This policy is not meant to be a contract between the District and the students, and may be amended at any time.

Section Two: Scope of the Policy

Every student is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this policy are designed toward that end and shall apply during the following times and in the following places:

- a. On school grounds at any time;
- b. Off school grounds at a school bus stop, on a school bus, school activity, function, or event;
- c. When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is en route to and/or from school, or to or from a school activity, function or event;
- d. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.5(c)).
- e. Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities such as field trips, conferences, or athletic events; or is otherwise subject to

the jurisdiction of school authorities;

f. Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a school student or employee and is related to the victim's school affiliation, or when the off-campus conduct directly affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school; and

g. Off school grounds and when a student leaves without permission of a school official or any time Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this policy do not apply to student speech that occurs off campus if the speech is at a non-school sponsored event and does not cause or is not likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or a school activity.

Section Three: Equal Opportunity Statement

The School complies with all federal, state and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students. The school prohibits discrimination in admission, grading, discipline and any other activity based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, handicap, nationality or citizenship.

All decisions of the School Board and Administration will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above.

Section Four: Statement of Student Misconduct

The rules in this policy are designed to notify students (grades K-9) as to the types of behaviors that are unacceptable; nevertheless, every specific variation of the prohibited conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for misconduct that is obviously inappropriate. A specific rule need not be written for every conceivable variation of behavior that directly affects the orderly mission of the school.

Section Five: References to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated

References to Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) included in this policy do not require that the elements of the specific criminal code section referenced be proved beyond a reasonable doubt before schools may punish misconduct. Further, these code references do not impose any additional intent requirements upon schools pursuing discipline against students for violation of this policy.

When a school rule is violated that may also be a violation of the law, the schools may notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Section Six: Discipline Rules and Prohibited Conduct

RULE 1 - DISRUPTION AND INTERFERENCE WITH SCHOOL

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with school by any means including, but not limited to, any of the following behaviors:

- 1A. Pull fire alarm;
- 1B. Occupy or block any area of the campus, prevent or attempt to prevent students from attending a class, school activity or event;
- 1C. Except under the direct instruction of the principal, block or attempt to block normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a school campus or adjacent grounds;
- 1D. School disruption. A student may not in any manner, by use of violence, noise, force coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, insult, or other conduct, intentionally or unintentionally cause the disruption of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school;
- 1E. Class disruption. Student behavior that is repetitive or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach and/or students' ability to learn;
- 1F. Disorderly conduct. Any act that substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety and/or welfare of one or more students, staff members and/or others;
- 1G. Refuse to identify himself/herself upon request of any teacher, principal, superintendent, school bus driver, or other school personnel;
- 1H. Urge, encourage, or counsel other students to violate any rules of the Student Conduct Behavior Policy;
- 1I. Be on campus or enter the premises of a school without proper authorization of the superintendent, principal, or other school personnel;
- 1J. Dress inappropriately (including drug, alcohol, or tobacco advertisements, graffiti, etc.) (A list of each prohibited item is available at each local school);
- 1K. Willfully fails to leave the premises after being told to do so;

1L. Other Disruptive Conduct to be explained in detail in discipline documents

Mandatory Reporting of Repeated and Substantial Class Interference

Teachers are required to report any student's violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Policy which repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of the students in his or her class to learn.

Teachers shall report any such incidents to the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior. Such report shall not exceed one page and shall describe the behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one day of receiving such report, send to the student's parents or guardians a copy of the report, and information regarding how the principal or the principal's designee may be contacted. Such students may be expelled from the School or may not be permitted to re-enroll during the next school year.

Student Removal from Class

A teacher may remove or refer to the principal or designee a student from class if the student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach students in his or her class or the ability of other students to learn in the class. The Board shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738.

Where a teacher has previously filed a report of a student's repeated or substantial interference with the classroom or where the behavior of a student poses an immediate threat to the safety of student's classmates or the teacher, the teacher shall have the authority to remove the student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-738. The school will have a placement review committee that shall be responsible for determining the appropriate placement of a student when the principal recommends that the student be returned to the classroom and the teacher withholds consent for the student's return. The placement review committee shall consist of three members, including two teachers and one alternate teacher chosen by the faculty and a member of the professional staff chosen by the principal.

RULE 2 - DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to school property or alter/misuse school technology or any other equipment, including accessing unauthorized areas on the computer. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property. A student shall not access/alter school/teacher records. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property or attempt to possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen school property.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 2A. Damage or vandalize school property;
- 2B. Steal school property (valued at less than \$300.00);

- 2C. Engage in larceny/theft of school property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 2D. Possess, use, sell, buy or transmit stolen school property (valued at less than \$300.00);
 - 2E. Possess, use, sell, buy or transmit stolen school property (valued at \$300.00 or more);
- 2F. Alter/misuse technology or any other equipment-hardware or software or school website/page;
- 2G. Engage in computer trespass (accessing unauthorized areas on the computer/software);
- 2H. Accessing/altering school/teacher records;
- 2I. Undertake breaking and entering and/or burglary;
- 2L. Commit arson (by means of fire or explosive a person knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to do damage);
- 2M. Rob or attempt to rob by using violence, threat, or intimidation;
- 2N. Commit armed robbery (with intent to commit theft, a person takes property of another by use of any offensive weapon or any replica, article, or device having the appearance of such weapon);
- 2O. Compromising test security of an international, national, state or county standardized test;
- 2P. Violation of the School's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- 2Q. Other Destructive Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

RULE 3 - DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property or steal or attempt to steal private property. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy or transmit stolen private property on school grounds. Further, off school grounds, a student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property belonging to a school employee where such theft or damage is because of that school employee's performance of his/her official duties. A student shall not sell or buy or attempt to sell or buy personal property on school grounds.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 3A. Damage or vandalize private property of another person (valued at less than

\$300.00);

3B. Damage or vandalize private property (valued at \$300.00 or more); 3C. Steal private property of another person (valued at less than \$300.00); 3D. Possess, use, sell, buy, or transmit stolen property (valued at less than \$300.00); 3E. Possess, use, sell, buy, or transmit stolen property (valued at \$300.00 or more); 3F Engage in larceny/theft of private property (valued at \$300.00 or more); 3G. Steal or attempt to steal a motor vehicle;

3H. Rob or attempt to rob by using violence, threat, or intimidation;

3I. Commit armed robbery (with intent to commit theft, a person takes property of another by use of an offensive weapon or any replica, article, or device having the appearance of such weapon);

3J. Commit arson (by means of fire or explosive a person knowingly damages or knowingly causes, aids, abets, advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to do damage);

3K. Other Destructive Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

RULE 4 - ABUSE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT OR BATTERY ON A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, undermining, or provoking nature to or about a school employee or in the presence of a school employee. This includes, but is not limited to, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity, ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur, or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list", "people to kill", "people to shoot", or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people. Further, a student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury or make physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to a school employee.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

4A. Oral threat/verbal assault (oral speech that creates, or is intended to create, a fear of physical harm);

4B. Written threat;

4C. Rude and/or disrespectful conduct including but not limited to symbolic gestures and insults;

4D. Cyberbullying. Any electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property, off school property, with school equipment, or with non school equipment, that: (1)

is directed specifically at school personnel; (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the school personnel(s)' person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Cyberbullying includes any act of bullying that involves the use of electronic communication, including but not limited to communication devices and services, including but not limited to cellular telephones, cameras, computers, social media platforms, text messages, chat platforms and internet sites.

4E. Use of profanity;

4F. Ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, or disability slur;

4G. Harassment - Repeated words (verbal or written), conduct, or action that annoys, alarms, or causes distress and serves no legitimate purpose;

4H. Any expression (oral, written, or gesture) which has the effect of undermining the authority of the school employee or distracting staff and/or students from the learning environment, including writings of a threatening or provoking nature;

4I. Terroristic threats (threatening to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another, with the purpose of causing the evacuation of a building, with the purpose of causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror, the evacuation of a building, or serious inconvenience).

4J. Posturing to inflict physical harm. Any action or gesture directed toward a school employee that places the school employee in reasonable fear of immediate physical harm;

4K. Other Threatening Conduct to a school employee to be 4BA. Behavior that could cause physical injury;

4L. Behavior that unintentionally caused physical injury to employee;

4M Intentional physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature to employee; 4N. Aggravated battery (maliciously causing bodily harm to another by depriving him or her of a member of his or her body, or by rendering a member of his or her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his or her body or a member thereof);

4O. Homicide/murder;

4P. Kidnapping (seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will); 4Q. Voluntary manslaughter;

4R. Enter without permission the private property of a school employee and/or deface/damage/vandalize such property;

4S. Intentional physical contact that caused physical harm to an employee; 4T. Violence against a teacher

4U. Other Violent Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

This rule applies off school grounds when the misconduct by the alleged perpetrator is because of the school employee's performance of his/her official duties.

Intentional Physical Contact with a Teacher, Bus Driver, or Other School Employee

Any student who intentionally makes physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature with a teacher, bus driver, school official, or other school employee shall be suspended and brought before a disciplinary

hearing.

The minimum penalty for a student found in violation of Rule 4M or 4S shall be suspension from school until the end of the school year. Any hearing finding a student in violation of Rule 4M or 4S may impose a more severe penalty in its discretion. This minimum penalty shall not be applied in conflict with applicable law.

Any student found in violation of Rule 4N, 4O, 4P, 4Q, or 4T shall be expelled from the school for the remainder of their eligibility to attend school. The following exceptions apply: (1) The Board, in its discretion, may allow a student found in violation to return to school after completing certain remedial programs, (2) the Board, in its discretion and upon the recommendation of the disciplinary tribunal, may allow a student in grades 6-8 to return to the school system for grades 9-12, (3) the Board, in its discretion, may allow a student in grades K-5 to return to the school, (4) permanent expulsion will not be imposed where this penalty would infringe any right created under law, and (5) permanent expulsion will not be imposed where the student acts in self defense as provided in O.C.G.A . 16-3-21.

RULE 5 - ABUSE, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, ASSAULT OR BATTERY BY A STUDENT ON ANOTHER STUDENT OR TO ANY OTHER PERSON NOT EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, distracting, or provoking nature to or about a person/student or in the presence of a person/student. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity; ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur; or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list", "people to kill", "people to shoot", or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people.

Bullying of one student by another student is strictly prohibited for students in grades 6th-12th. State law defines "bullying" as: 1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; 2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily injury or harm; or 3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that: a) causes substantial physical harm or visible harm; b) substantially interferes with a student's education or otherwise substantially interferes with the rights of a student; c) is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating/threatening educational environment; or d) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Upon finding by a disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials that a student in grades 6 - 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall assigned to an alternative school that meets the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2- 154.1(d): (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4) Retaliation for reports of bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to independent disciplinary action. The prohibition against bullying includes off campus cyberbullying that is (1) directed specifically at students or school personnel; (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Where a school administrator determines that a student has committed bullying,

the School leader shall notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control of a student that the student has been disciplined for bullying and shall provide a description of the bullying behavior and the consequence imposed. This consequence can include referral to a disciplinary tribunal and make include a referral for counseling services for students who have committed bullying or who are targets or suspected victims of bullying.

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause bodily injury to any student/person. A student shall not engage in any behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of another person or has the likelihood of provoking a fight.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

5A. Oral threat/verbal assault (oral speech that creates, or is intended to create, a fear of physical harm);

5B. Written threat;

5C. Rude and/or disrespectful conduct including but not limited to symbolic gestures and insults;

5D. Bullying; (See note below on bullying and state law above)

5E. Cyberbullying. Any electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property, off school property, with school equipment, or with non school equipment, that: (1) is directed specifically at student(s); (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the student(s)' person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. Cyberbullying further includes any act of bullying that involves the use of electronic communication, including but not limited to communication devices and services, including but not limited to cellular telephones, cameras, computers, social media platforms, text messages, chat platforms and internet sites.

5F. Use of profanity;

5G. Ethnic, racial, sexual, religious or disability slur;

5H. Harassment - Repeated words (verbal or written), conduct, or action that annoys, alarms, or causes distress and serves no legitimate purpose;

5I. Posturing to fight;

5J. Terroristic threats (threatening to commit any crime of violence, release any hazardous substance, or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another, with the purpose of causing the evacuation of a building, with the purpose of causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror, the evacuation of a building,

or serious inconvenience)

5K. Pushing and shoving;

5L. Fighting;

5M. Battery (when one individual physically attacks or beats up on another individual) 5N.

Behavior that could cause physical injury;

5O. Behavior that caused physical injury to another student;

5P. Physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to another student;

5Q. Aggravated battery (maliciously causing bodily harm to another by depriving him or her of a member of his or her body, or by rendering a member of his or her body useless, or by seriously disfiguring his or her body or a member thereof);

5R. Homicide/murder;

5S. Kidnapping (seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will);

5T. Hazing (as a condition or precondition of gaining acceptance, membership, office, or other status in any school or school organization, subjecting a student to an activity which endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health or emotional well being of a student, regardless of a student's willingness to participate in such activity);

5U. Voluntary manslaughter;

5W. Other Violent Behavior to be explained in detail in discipline documents

RULE 6 - WEAPONS, DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS AND EXPLOSIVE, OR IMPLOSIVE DEVICES

A student shall not solicit to buy or sell, or buy or sell or possess, handle, transmit, threaten with or discharge/use, any object that can reasonably be considered or converted to and/or used as a weapon such as, but not limited to knives; guns; pellet guns; brass knuckles; fireworks; lighters, tear gas, mace, explosives, pepper spray; bats (other than for athletics); clubs, sticks or other instruments of a bludgeoning type; Chinese stars; razors; projectiles and the like.

The prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, possession of the following: 6A.

- Knife less than 2 inches;
- 6B. Knife 2 inches or more;
- 6C. Handgun;
- 6D. Rifle or shotgun;
- 6E. BB/pellet/airsoft/paintball gun or rifle;
- 6F. Toy or any look-a-like gun;
- 6G. Destructive device (bomb, grenade, mine, rocket, missile, pipe bomb or similar device);
- 6H. Brass knuckles or metal knucks;
- 6I. Fire works;
- 6J. Accelerants (any liquid/aerosol, etc. which may be used to start or perpetuate a fire or other hazardous condition);
- 6K. Tear gas, mace or pepper spray;
- 6L. Bats, clubs, sticks or other instruments of a bludgeoning type (other than for athletics);
- 6M. Razors or razor blades;
- 6N. Spring stick/expandable baton;
- 6O. Nun chahka, nun check, nunchaku, shuriken, fighting chain, [any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely];
- 6P. Throwing star, oriental dart, or any disc having two or more points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled;
- 6Q. Taser/Stun gun;
- 6R. Other Weapon or device intended to cause physical harm.

Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon or Hazardous Object on School Property or at School Functions

Students are prohibited from possessing firearms (including a handgun, rifle, shotgun, or other weapon which will or can be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or electrical charge, dangerous weapons (as defined by O.C.G.A. 16-11-121) or hazardous objects (as defined by O.C.G.A. 20-2-751), while

on school property or at school functions. A student shall be excluded from school for one calendar year for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm or a dangerous weapon (as defined by O.C.G.A. 16-11-121), provided that all hearing officers, tribunals, panels, administrators, and the Board shall have the discretion to impose a lesser or more harsh, appropriate consequence on a case-by-case basis for any such offense. Any student possessing a hazardous object (as defined by the O.C.G.A. 20-2-751), while on school property or at school functions, shall receive disciplinary consequences in the discretion of the hearing officer, tribunal, panel, administrator, the superintendent, or the Board, as consistent with the Board's policies and procedures.

This Rule shall not apply to individuals who are permitted to carry weapons by O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1.

RULE 7 - DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND VAPING

A student shall not be involved in any substance, drug, alcohol tobacco or vaping transaction, including, without limitation to buy, possess, sell, use, transmit, solicit; attempt to buy, possess, sell, use, or transmit; or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, depressant or stimulant drug including without limitation caffeine pills, hallucinogenic drug, anabolic steroid, amphetamine, barbiturate, cannabis, inhalant, alcoholic beverage, vaping product or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell, buy or transmit, or attempt to sell, buy or transmit any substance under the pretense that it is, in fact, a prohibited substance as described in this rule. The misuse or unauthorized possession of a prescription drug or nonprescription drug shall be considered a violation of this rule; however, this rule shall not apply to proper possession and/or use of a drug as authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician.

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit any drug-related paraphernalia any tobacco related paraphernalia, or any vaping related paraphernalia, which includes, but is not limited to, pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, electronic smoking devices, or any other items related to drug use, tobacco use, vaping or depicting drugs, drug use, tobacco, vaping, or tobacco use, except where such items are related to approved curriculum.

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit tobacco or nicotine products. The prohibited substances, products and behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following: 7A. Alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind;

7B. Amphetamine/methamphetamine drug [schedule II];

7C. Hallucinogenic drug [schedule I] [ex. peyote, PCP, etc.];

7D. Anabolic steroid [schedule III];

7E. Controlled drug or controlled substance {ex. Ritalin, Adderall, Phenobarbital, Percocet, OxyContin, Xanax, etc.};

- 7F. Cannabis (including but without limitation to marijuana, hemp, THC, etc.); 7G. LSD [schedule I];
- 7H. Cocaine [schedule II];
- 7I. Heroin [schedule I];
- 7J. Inhalants (any volatile solvents, aerosols, anesthetics, or volatile nitrites) [ex. glue, paint thinner, hair spray, Pam, ether, etc.];
- 7K. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs(ex. NoDoz, Vivarin, asthma medicines, energy/diet pills, aspirins, herb pills, etc.);
- 7L. Look alike substance (under the pretense);
- 7M. Cannabis (selling - including possession of cannabis that is packaged for distribution or possession of one ounce or more)
- 7N. Offering, requesting, and/or receiving of a substance;
- 7O. Furnishing/providing/selling of a substance;
- 7P. Non-controlled prescription drug (ex. Prozac, Seroquel, Amoxicillin, etc.); 7Q. Pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, or other objects used for drug use; 7R. Photographs, drawings or depictions of drugs, drug use, or objects used for drug use;
- 7S. Photographs, drawings or depictions of tobacco, vaping, tobacco use, or objects used for tobacco use or vaping;
- 7T. Electronic Smoking or Vaping Device;
- 7U. Tobacco products (ex. cigarettes, electronic tobacco or nicotine cartridges [any type], chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, cigars, liquid nicotine (regardless of biological source), electronic cigarette vapors (with or without nicotine), etc.);

Self-administration of asthma medication and prescription auto-injectable epinephrine is permitted with written parental approval and required documentation to the principal or his or her designee. See administrator for completion of proper forms/procedures.

RULE 8 - DISREGARD OF DIRECTIONS OR COMMANDS

A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized school personnel.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 8A. Failure to follow directions or commands of staff;
- 8B. Failure to follow written directions, local school rules or regulations;
- 8C. Failure to serve an administrative consequence (ex. Administrative Detention, Saturday School);

RULE 9 - SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/INDECENCY/SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A student shall not engage in any act of sexual harassment of a physical nature or verbal nature. A student shall not perform any act of indecent exposure, lewd exposure, gesture or lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body or the body of another person, or any act of sexual intercourse. A student shall not allow another student/person to commit a lewd or indecent act to the body of oneself. A student shall not use any inappropriate gestures that mimic or imply sexual acts or engage in any acts of "streaking" or "mooning" as those terms are commonly understood. Such acts will not be regarded lightly or considered pranks.

A student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including any non-curricular sexually explicit printed or non-printed materials; or a student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including but not limited to non-curricular materials depicting the human male or female genitals or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering or any portion of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering.

A student who engages in any of the behaviors covered by this rule shall be subject to discipline, including alternative placement, suspension, expulsion, and any other penalty provided by this code, and may also be subject to a Title IX investigation and associated consequences, as set forth in policy S3.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

9A. Sexual harassment. Deliberate and unsolicited physical actions, gestures, or verbal or written comments of a sexual nature that are repeated or a single incident of a sufficiently serious nature to create a hostile environment; or unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity. This can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature or based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

9B. Lewd (sexual) exposure (any act of) (This includes "streaking" and "mooning.");

9C. Obscene and/or indecent gestures or gestures that mimic or imply sexual intercourse;

9D. Lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body or the body of another person;

- 9E. Sexual intercourse;
- 9F. Oral sex or any act of sodomy;
- 9G. Aggravated sexual battery;
- 9H. Pornographic materials. Possession or transmission by any means of descriptions, images, recordings, or other materials involving the display of genitals, pubic area, buttocks or breasts;
- 9I. Sexually Exploitative/Sexually Explicit materials. Possession or transmission by any means of descriptions, images, recordings or other materials involving (a) sexual acts of any type, (b) exposure of the genitals, pubic area, breasts or buttocks of a minor, or (c) other graphic sexual content;
- 9J. Recording images of intimate areas. Recording, possession, and/or transmission of images of students or employees that are of a sexual nature and that were taken without the consent of the student or employee;
- 9K. Kissing or any act of intimacy;
- 9L. Aggravated child molestation;
- 9M. Aggravated sodomy;
- 9N. Rape;
- 9O. Sexual battery (Intentional physical contact with the intimate parts of the body of another person without the consent of that person);
- 9P. Allowing another student/person to commit a lewd or indecent act to the body of oneself;
- 9Q. Sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual behavior, advances or requests for favors, unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical sexual conduct; offensive, severe, and/or frequent remarks about a person's sexual, or any harassment of a sexual nature which interferes with a student's right to an education or ability to participate in a school program or activity.
- 9R. Violation of the School's Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- 9Q. Other Sexual Behavior

RULE 10 - UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except with written permission of the

teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official. A student may not leave school grounds prior to the end of the school day, after his/her initial arrival on campus, without the permission of a duly authorized school official.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 10A. Tardy to class;
- 10B. Tardy to school;
- 10C. AWOL from class(Absent without official leave);
- 10D. AWOL from school;
- 10E. Unexcused absence (Failure to comply with compulsory school attendance law);

RULE 11 - OTHER CONDUCT WHICH IS SUBVERSIVE TO GOOD ORDER

A student shall not perform any other act which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools. This includes, but is not limited to, violation of local school rules; violation of state and federal law; involvement in criminal gang-related behavior and/or criminal gang conduct as defined and prohibited by O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 and 16-15-4; providing false information to school personnel; unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of laser pointers, and electronic communications devices (including tape recorders, radios, CD Players, MP3 players, video games, and televisions); loitering or trespassing, providing false information to or about school personnel, or community misconduct that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community.

A student shall not hold oneself out as a member of a criminal street gang identified by one's mode of dress, means and method of communication including the use of handsigns, or the possession or publication of gang writings/symbols.

Subject to the rules listed below, the Board permits students to possess electronic pagers, cell phones or communication devices on a limited basis and provides local school principals with the authority to set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use of such devices at their individual schools.

The prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 11A. Criminal gang-related activity (as defined by O.C.G.A.16-15-3 and 16-15-4) including but not limited to: (1) Conduct or participate in a criminal street gang through criminal gang activity as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3; (2) Acquire, maintain, directly or indirectly, through criminal gang activity or proceeds derived there from any interest in or control of any real or personal property of any nature, including money; (3) Engage in, directly or indirectly, or conspire to engage in criminal gang activity while acting as an organizer, supervisor or other position of management with regard

to a criminal street gang; (4) Cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce another to participate in a criminal street gang; (5) Communicate, directly or indirectly, with another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or to any associate or relative of the other person with the intent to deter such person from assisting a member or associate of a criminal street gang to withdraw from such criminal street gang; (6) Communicate, directly or indirectly, with another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or to any associate or relative of the other person with the intent to punish or retaliate against such person for having withdrawn from a criminal street gang; (7) While employed by or associated with a criminal street gang, commit any offense enumerated in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 with knowledge that members of such criminal street gang have committed one or more of such offenses; (8) Commit any offense enumerated in O.C.G.A. 16-15-3 with the intent to maintain or increase his or her status or position in a criminal street gang;

11B. Retaliating against or deterring a witness. No student shall use threats, physical force, intimidation or violence to deter a student from, or retaliate against a student for: (1) providing information to school staff regarding the violation of the policy, the commission of a criminal act or the commission of a delinquent act, or (2) testifying at a school disciplinary hearing.

11C. Provide false information and/or forgery;

11D. Cheating;

11E. Gambling;

11F. Plagiarism;

11G. Foul language (profane or vulgar language not directed at another person) on school property or at a school-sponsored event;

11H. Laser pointers;

11I. Unauthorized use during school hours of electronic devices including but not limited to: tape recorders, radios, Cellphones. CD players, MP3 players, video games, and televisions;

11J. Loitering;

11K. Criminal trespassing;

11L. Community misconduct that would pose a threat to the school community. Any off campus behavior of a student which (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process;

11M. Other felony-Behavior of a student which could result in the student being charged criminally with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult: (list);

11N. Holding oneself out as a member of a criminal street gang by more than one of the following: one's mode of dress, means and method of communication including the use of handsigns, the possession or publication of gang writings/symbols, or admission of membership;

11O. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or school employee toward a student;

RULE 12 - REPEATED VIOLATIONS/MISBEHAVIOR/CHRONIC DISCIPLINARY PROBLEM STUDENTS

Students who chronically disrupt or repeatedly violate other school rules may be charged with repeated violations of school rules or misbehavior. This rule applies after remediation attempts, including the development and implementation of a student disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

12A. Chronically disrupt or repeatedly violate other school rules;

The student and parent must be notified in advance that once the student has been placed on a Rule 12, all subsequent violations will lead to an escalation in consequences and may lead to an independent Rule 12 charge and a disciplinary hearing.

RULE 13 - SCHOOL BUS INFRACTIONS

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with a school bus or other means of transportation by any means including, but not limited to, any of the following behaviors:

13A. Disruption of school transportation. A student shall not in any manner use violence, force, fear, threat or other conduct to disrupt or interfere with a driver's ability to operate the vehicle safely;

13B. Throwing objects at the driver;

13C. Failure to follow directions, rules or regulations;

13D. Use of mirrors, lasers, flash cameras or any other lights or reflective devices during the operation of a school bus without the permission of the driver;

13E. Posturing to fight;

13F. Fighting;

13G. Diverting or distracting the driver's attention;

13H. Throwing objects on the vehicle or out the vehicle window;

13I. Excessive noise;

13J. Use of any electronic device during the operation of a vehicle, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones;

Note: All other school rules still apply while on a school bus or at the bus stop. Discipline may also

include suspension of transportation privileges.

STUDENT ALLEGATIONS

OCGA 20-2-751.7(a) Education; alleged inappropriate behavior by teacher or school personnel; provisions: Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Board of Director's Chairman or designee. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to child welfare agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney. Reports of acts sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the Board of Directors and Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Bill Summary From the State: This bill addresses falsified reports of inappropriate behavior of educators toward students, establishes a complaint procedure, requires notice of the procedure in teacher and student handbooks, provides for statements to the media, and provides penalties for students who falsify reports.

Requirements:

- Student codes of conduct must add falsifying, omitting or erroneously reporting information regarding alleged inappropriate behavior of school personnel toward a student.
- PSC must establish a state-mandated process for students to report such claims; the process must reserve the right of the students to report to law enforcement, and the bill requires publishing the process in teacher and student handbooks.

- If the report is deemed unsubstantiated, the LEA shall, at the request of the employee, submit a written statement to that effect to the media outlets that previously reported the claim.
- A student over 10 years old who falsely reports with malice can be punished by:
 - o Court ordered community service, or any other court sanction;
 - o Suspension or expulsion from the school system; or both court and school penalties

ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Instruction is the most important aspect of each day at school. Comprehensive instruction coupled with effective classroom management provides your child with an optimum learning environment. Georgia's Standards of Excellence serve as the basis for all instructional planning.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework provides students with the opportunity to apply the information they have learned and develop independence. Meaningful and quality homework is limited to 30 minutes per night. However, students are encouraged to pursue non-assigned, independent leisure reading.

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Mid-term progress reports are sent home every 4-1/2 weeks and report cards are sent home after each 9 week grading period. Students receive an evaluation of their achievement and general conduct. Please be prepared to discuss the progress reports/report card if necessary. Also, parents may call the main office if they need to set up a conference with any one or all of their child's teachers. Outstanding debts or non-payment of debts may result in report cards being withheld until all debts are settled.

The following criteria are used in determining grades:

1st – 9th Grades

A

90-100

B

80-89

C

70-79

F

Below 70

EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADING

Teachers are expected to score a variety of assessments (formative and summative) to gauge students' levels of understanding. Best practices would show that grades should be entered on a weekly basis by the teachers. We will be monitoring the gradebooks this year (as will parents) and must see evidence that teachers are entering the grades into Infinite Campus in a timely manner. Failure to enter grades into Infinite Campus in a timely manner could result in a warning and ultimately a write-up from the principal. Please adhere to the following when considering an ample amount of grades for the students that you are teaching - Each subject must have at least 5 grades entered into Infinite Campus before Progress Reports are sent home for a total of 12 grades per 9 weeks report cards.

1st - 8th Grade: 40% Classwork, 30% Quizzes, 20% Assessments, and 10% Homework

9th Grade: 30% Classwork, 20% Quizzes, 20% Assessments, 10% Homework and 20% EOCT

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The following criteria are used in determining grades:

<u>1st – 11th Grades</u>	
<u>A</u> 90-100	<u>C</u> 70-79
<u>B</u> 80-89	<u>F</u> Below 70

We encourage you to contact your child's teacher if you have questions regarding your child's progress.

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY.

The following criteria must be met in order to be promoted to the next grade:

Elementary - Kindergarten

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, kindergarten students must demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory Developing Skills (GKIDS) for language arts and math as well as all other kindergarten assessments. Also, other assessments, such as MAP Growth. In addition, the student must meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School.

Elementary - Grades 1st - 5th

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 1st - 5th must:

- pass reading/ELA with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass math with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass the Reading/English Language Arts state assessment (if one is given)
- pass the Math state assessment (if one is given)
- meet all attendance requirements as specified by Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

Middle School - Grades 6th - 8th

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 6th-8th must:

- pass reading/ELA with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass math with a final grade of 70% or better
- pass Science OR Social Studies for the year (must have a final grade of at least 70%)
- pass the Reading/English Language Arts state assessment (if one is given)
- pass the Math state assessment (if one is given)
- meet all attendance requirements as specified by Sowega STEM Charter School

High School - Grades 9th - 12th

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 9th and 10th must have the minimum number of required credits needed to be promoted to the next grade level.

Grade Placement/Units Required for Graduation - Class of 2021 and beyond

The following units will be necessary at the opening of school each year.

Please see guidance counselor for any questions:

23 Units of credit required for graduation

- 5 Units passed = sophomore
- 12 Units passed = junior

- 20 Units passed = senior

Any student not meeting the criteria above will be retained. Should a parent or teacher wish to appeal a retention, a committee will be formed consisting of no less than a parent, teacher, and administrator, to decide if retention is in the best interest of the student. If the committee decides it is not in the best interest of the student to be retained, then the student will be placed into the next grade level.

High School - 9th - 12th Grade

State-required areas of study	
To graduate, Georgia students must earn a minimum of 23 credits (also called units) in the following areas of study:	
Required Area of Study	Credit/Unit
Language Arts	4
Mathematics	4
Science (3 required and 1 elective)	4
Social Studies	3
Modern/Classical Language and/or Technical Education and/or Fine Arts	3
Health and Physical Education	1
Electives	4

REMEDICATION

Remediation will be available to students that have been determined to need remedial help in reading and/or mathematics. Students qualify based on test scores and daily academic performance.

TESTING

The State Department of Education requires standardized testing at certain grades. Students here also receive additional testing. You will be notified well in advance of test dates so that you can prepare for testing.

- The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) provides diagnostic information about kindergarten students' developing skills in language arts, math, science, social studies, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning.
- The Georgia Milestones is a comprehensive summative assessment which measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts,

mathematics, science, and social studies. It is administered to 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

- End of Course Testing Improved teaching and learning are the main focus of Georgia's education system. The EOCT align with Georgia's state mandated content standards and include assessment of specific content knowledge and skills. The assessments provide diagnostic information to help students identify strengths and areas of need in learning, therefore improving performance in all high school courses. The EOCT also provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction at the school, system and state levels. In 2011 – 2012, the EOCT became Georgia's high school accountability assessment as part of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).
- Benchmark Assessments are designed to measure student progress in Pre-K through 9th grade and will be administered as pre-assessments at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and post-assessments at the end.
 - The MAP assessments are used to screen students for their reading and math achievement levels. MAP assessments help determine reading and math achievement levels in order to place students into the Accelerated Reader program. MAP Fluency assessments help educators monitor students' growing literacy skills and students' progress toward becoming independent readers. MAP assessments are also used to monitor student growth throughout the year, to estimate students' understanding of state standards, and predict students' performance on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. In addition, MAP also helps teachers determine appropriate instructional levels and skills that students are ready to learn.
 - USA TestPrep is utilized to monitor the student growth of 3rd-11th graders throughout the year in the content areas of Science and Social Studies.